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**Tema:**

**THE USE OF THE DIRECT METHOD IN THE CLASSROOM TO  
IMPROVE PRONUNCIATION**

**Tema de investigación previo a la obtención del título de "Diploma  
Superior en Metodologías Comunicativas del Idioma Inglés".**

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Tema:

THE USE OF THE DIRECT METHOD IN THE CLASSROOM TO  
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## DECLARACIÓN DE AUTENCIDAD Y RESPONSABILIDAD

Yo, Jenny del Carmen Tobar Castillo, portadora de la cédula de ciudadanía # 1802653418 declaro que esta investigación presentada como informe final, previo a la obtención del título de "Diploma Superior en Metodologías Comunicativas del Idioma Inglés" son totalmente originales, auténticos y personales.

En tal virtud, declaro que el contenido, las conclusiones y los efectos legales y académicos que se derivan del trabajo propuesto de investigación y luego de la redacción de este documento son y serán de mi sola y exclusiva responsabilidad legal y académica.

  
Jenny del Carmen Tobar Castillo  
CC. 1802653418

## **DEDICATION**

The present work is dedicated to my husband, my children and y parents, who have helped me each and every moment of my life with effort, love and dedication.

Jenny Tobar

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would like to offer this work, which is the result of my effort and constancy, to an infallible being in my life, God.

My special thanks to the Catholic University of Ambato, which offered me the opportunity of personal improvement through its valuable guide in order to get a degree and perform as a qualified professional.

And to my professors, who had helped us become critical-reflexive being, and to be more creative so that we could guide youth, who are the hope of progress for this country.

## ABSTRACT

This work presents important information about the origin of the direct method and its advantages in the improvement of pronunciation; furthermore, it presents us some useful alternatives about the use of this method applied on activities inside the classroom. These topics are really important for English teachers that are searching efficient methods as part of their daily plans and for students that are looking for the improvement of their knowledge. The first and the second chapter offer a variety of essential definitions about the beginning of the direct method and what is it about. The third chapter has some proposals about the use of the direct method in some activities that help to improve the student's pronunciation.

## RESUMEN

El presente trabajo muestra información acerca de los orígenes del método directo y sus ventajas en el mejoramiento de la pronunciación; además nos presenta algunas alternativas sobre la utilización de este método en actividades dentro del aula. Estos temas son de gran importancia tanto para los profesores de Inglés que buscan métodos eficientes como parte de su planificación diaria, como para los estudiantes que buscan mejorar sus conocimientos. El primer y segundo capítulo ofrecen una diversidad de definiciones esenciales acerca de los comienzos de este método directo y de qué se trata el mismo. El tercer capítulo contiene algunas propuestas acerca de la utilización del método directo en actividades relacionadas al mejoramiento de la pronunciación en los estudiantes.

## Table of Contents

Documento de aprobación .....	ii
Declaración de autenticidad y responsabilidad .....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Acknowledgement .....	v
Abstract .....	vi
Resumen .....	vii
Table of Contents .....	viii
Introduction .....	1
Chapter I	
1. The origins of the Direct Method.....	3
1.1. Aims of the Direct Method.....	4
1.2. Principles of the Direct Method.....	5
1.2.1. Oral Training.....	5
1.2.2. Inhibition of the Mother Tongue.....	5
1.2.3. Sentence is the Unit of Speech.....	6
1.2.4. Inductive Teaching of Grammar.....	6
1.3. Direct Method - Typical Techniques.....	7
1.4. Advantages of the Direct Method.....	8
1.5. Drawbacks.....	9

## Chapter II

2.	Berlitz Schools and their approach to English teaching.....	11
2.1.	The Berlitz History- Maximilian D. Berlitz .....	12
2.2.	Expansion and Diversification.....	13
2.3.	A Changing Student Body.....	14
2.4.	Corporate History.....	17

## Chapter III

3.	Ideas on how to teach pronunciation through the Direct Method.....	18
3.1.	Grounds.....	18
3.2.	Using dictation to teach pronunciation.....	20
3.2.1.	How to use dictation.....	21
3.2.1.1.	Before class.....	21
3.2.1.2.	In class.....	23
3.2.1.3.	Follow-up activities.....	25
3.3.	Using songs to teach pronunciation.....	27
3.3.1	Using songs to focus on sounds.....	27
	Model Activity 1.....	27
	Model Activity 2.....	28
	Model Activity 3.....	29
	Model Activity 4.....	30
	Model Activity 5.....	31
	Conclusions.....	32
	Recommendations.....	33
	Bibliography.....	34

## **Introduction**

Using the direct method in classroom is useful for teachers but sometimes the use of this method is a little bit difficult for students because they can become confused about the native language and the foreign language. The most common problem in the teaching process is the lack of new strategies and methods in the English classes, that is why teachers must look for new ways to apply it in order to make the English classes more active.

When teachers apply the direct method they are helping students to reach enough confidence and motivation on the use of the English Language in order to communicate it consists on giving and receiving information.

Many students need to use English in their higher education and also at their work, for this reason, they need to speak English to exchange important information. Therefore, there is too much information in English that students need to understand because it is part of their daily activities. Most of the information in different fields is in English and the best way for students to learn this language is through the direct method by the use of mime, gestures, demonstration and other visual aids. The teacher's job is to encourage and support the learner's efforts by showing a positive attitude. In order to help learners to be more independent in their learning there are a lot of strategies that also help them to be immersed in the language so they can find learning fun, sometimes it could be hard because of the environment or the system we are on.

When we have many different ways to teach English without using the native language, we still have problems trying to make it totally possible so we have to consider the aspects of education and the curricular design that we use in our country. The main problem is the time that we spend teaching English and that most subjects at school are taught in the first language. It does not help when we want to have students listening, speaking, reading and writing in the second language.

# Chapter I

## 1.- The origins of the Direct Method

The direct method is also called natural method because it is really useful for teaching foreign languages, when teachers use this method they avoid the use of the learner's native language and just uses the target language. This method was established in Germany and France around the 1900s.

Yeong and Wang (2006) state that "... towards the end of the late 1800s, a revolution in language teaching philosophy took place that is seen by many as the dawn of modern foreign language teaching. Teachers, frustrated by the limits of the Grammar Translation Method in terms of its inability to create communicative competence in students, began to experiment with new ways of teaching language." (WANG and YEONG, 2006)

We can also see that communicative competence was an essential aspect in language learning that teachers needed to help their students develop, and that is why the direct method appeared. Even though a mother tongue is acquired in a different way than a second language, this methodology is trying to make the native language and the second language acquisition as similar as possible in order to make the learning process easier. Another really important referent of the Direct Method was the German Charles Berlitz because his schools and method are known all around the world.

On the other hand, this methodology presented problems. As Brown (2001) points out: "(it) did not take well in public education where the constraints of budget, classroom size, time, and teacher background made such a method difficult to use." But even with these complications, the Direct Method continues being accepted in many schools and applying for many teachers. (Brown, 2001)

The direct method appeared in developed countries because of the necessity of new methods in order to teach a second language, this method used different activities that involved mimic, gestures and a lot of direct contact with the language.

### **1.1 Aims of the Direct Method**

The direct method has a lot of important aims that are based on the theory that learners should experience the new language that are acquiring in the same way as they experienced their mother tongue. One of the most important aspect that teachers must consider is that students expect to understand the information that they read or hear in the second language without thinking on the native language. Another aim of the direct method is to avoid the translation of the information in the teaching English process, or they used it only if it is really necessary.

Students acquire the second language by experiencing the language through contact with the real life, it means that it is not important to study or

emphasize in the grammar or vocabulary, the most important is to make students understand the language in context, in order to be able to understand and answer using the second language.

## **1.2 Principles of the Direct Method**

### **1.2.1 Oral Training**

The use of the direct Method in teaching English requires a lot of oral training as this method uses the second language directly and students should be prepared to understand what is presented to them so it is really important for students to practice the language that they are acquiring in order to improve the pronunciation and the understanding.

The oral practice has an important role in the learning process, it is the most important activity for students to get better communication through this language.

### **1.2.2 Inhibition of the Mother Tongue**

When pupils are learning a new language by using some objects, or new vocabulary, they usually get confused when they are reproducing the new words learnt in the mother tongue. It is called "First Language Attrition", this situation influences in the student's capacity to learn the new language quickly, but some psychologists explain that it is because of the use of a foreign language. Scientifics applied experiments about the new language

acquisition and its inhibition with the mother tongue, the result of these experiments is that people who are starting to learn a new language get confused in pronunciation, but it disappears when they are becoming familiar with the foreign language.

### **1.2.3 Sentence is the Unit of Speech**

For learning a language it is necessary to get a lot of listening practice that helps to produce that language, but also there is an important part of the language called sentence. This is the beginning of the speech and enables the learner to internalize the structure of the target language. Some new vocabulary is introduced gradually depending on the level of students, but the vocabulary teaching is growing with the structure of sentences because the use of the speech has a lot of important structure for the correct communication.

A language is made by structures that start from the sentence, which is the smallest part of the speech but the most important one.

### **1.2.4 Inductive Teaching of Grammar**

Using the direct method on the study of the target language grammar is not an easy job. Learners acquired the new language by listening and being in contact with this language, but it is difficult to correct errors in their speech and writing exercises that is why grammar is taught inductively. It may be

useful for teachers to follow the useful grammatical plans that are on the textbook.

Grammar is a difficult part of a language but it is necessary to learn it in order to improve communication.

### **1.3 Direct Method - Typical Techniques**

Diane Larsen-Freeman, in the book *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching* (1986:26-27) provides expanded descriptions of some common and typical techniques closely associated with the Direct Method. The following list is a summary of such techniques:

1. **Reading aloud:** Reading sections of passages, plays, or dialogues out loud.
2. **Question and answer exercises:** Answering questions in the target language and having students answer in full sentences.
3. **Student self-correction:** Teacher facilitates opportunities for students to self-correct using follow-up questions, tone, etc.
4. **Conversation practice:** Teacher asks students and students ask students questions using the target language.
5. **Fill-in-the-blank exercises:** Items use target language only and inductive rather than explicit grammar rules.

6. **Dictation:** Teacher reads passage aloud several times at various tempos. Students write down what they hear.
7. **Paragraph writing:** Students write paragraphs in their own words using the target language and various models.

(LARSEN-FREEMAN, Diane 1986. Page 311)

The use of these techniques in the English classroom should be every day because the oral practice helps students to get confidence with the new language. The different activities that are used in order to teach English involve the opportunity to practice and improve the language learning process.

#### **1.4 Advantages of the Direct Method**

The use of the Direct Method has a lot advantages that make it a suitable tool for teachers and students. For Larsen-Freeman,

- It teaches the second or foreign language in the same way as we learn our mother tongue. The language is taught through demonstration and conversation in context so pupils acquire fluency in speech. They are quick at understanding spoken English and communicate easily.
- The Direct Method does not make difference between active and passive vocabularies. It means that the teacher makes every effort in order to make students understand the new vocabulary, and if the

vocabulary is taught through the mother tongue it is an active vocabulary, but if it is taught as part of the subject it is a passive vocabulary because they are receiving.

(FREEMAN, Larsen D. 1986 page 350)

## 1.5 Drawbacks

On the other hand, the use of the direct method also has some disadvantages according to West Michael that are exposed as follows:

- Some educationists say that this method is not really effective because of the lack of complement, they say that it is not complete because this method does not involve all the speech aspects, but the only benefit is that it links the foreign words with the idea that it represents.
- The learn of the language involves acquisition of skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing but the Direct Method concentrates on listening and speaking but not reading and writing. That is why many of those who have learned English through the Direct Method feel that they do not get adequate command over written language.

(WEST, Michael 2006, page 433 )

The Direct Method lets us generate plenty of activities for different types of learners. When students are exposed to vocabulary and expressions that are used in real contexts they are able to acquire a second language in a much

easier way. If we are willing to apply this method, by paying attention to the range of activities we can create, it could provide us with good results inside the classroom.

## Chapter II

### 2. Berlitz Schools and their approach to English teaching

The information presented in this chapter is taken from Berlitz's the official site and from other Internet sources, which include the history and development of the direct method.

According to Berlitz schools, the art of learning or studying a foreign language is a process in which is not effective that students take a dictionary and memorize all the words in it , the process to learn a new language is more useful when students are in contact with the foreign language. Francois Gouin (1880) told about the horrible experience that he lived when he went to Germany for one year in order to learn German, he tried to master the German language by memorising a German grammar book and a list of the 248 irregular German verbs, instead of talking with native speakers. After this time, he went to the university in order to test his knowledge but it was a total failure. When he returned to France ,Gouin discovered that his three years old nephew had learnt to speak a lot of words in the same year. This is a fact that made him think that the child had the secret in order to learn a language. So he concluded that for learning a new language is necessary to be in contact with it. This is the experience that makes some schools to apply the direct method that is useful for acquiring a new language. Berlitz Schools adopts the theory of the direct method. They believe that the best way to acquire the new language is by practicing it a lot.

So when students use the foreign language, they can understand easily short sentences like: I open the door. I study at university. I pull the door. The use of these sentences helps to learn the new language. The basic principles of Berlitz's method was that second language learning is similar to the first language learning, that is why there should be lots of oral interaction, spontaneous use of the language, no so much translation, and no grammatical rules and syntactic structures. The principles of the Direct Method were these:

- Classroom instruction was conducted in the target language, no mother tongue.
- There was an inductive approach to grammar.
- Only everyday vocabulary was taught.
- Basic vocabulary was taught through pictures and objects, while abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas.

(BERLITZ, D 1887 page 145)

## **2.1 The Berlitz History**

### **Maximilian D. Berlitz**

The Berlitz International organization was created in 1878 by Maximilian D. Berlitz in Providence, Rhode Island, USA. This organization came from a long line of teachers and mathematicians, Maximilian Berlitz grew up in the Black Forest region of Germany. He went to the United States in 1870 and came back ready to teach Greek, Latin, and six other European languages using the traditional grammar translation approach.

He built a successful career as a private teacher. Also he started to teach French and German language instruction after some time, he hired Nicholas Joly who arrived when Berlitz was really ill, but the problem was that he did not speak English, so the technique applied for this young Frenchman was to point at objects and not to use translations, this technique was successful and students learnt more about the new language, they learn to understand it and also they got a better pronunciation.

Berlitz quickly concluded that this method was effective and he started to search more information about this technique so in this way he was discovering the direct method that is applied in many countries in order to teach new languages.

## **2.2 Expansion and Diversification**

After the discovery of the direct method, Berlitz founded a multinational corporation that started to grow in Europe, Latin America and The Far East, so the demand for English soared, replacing French as the accepted language of the business world. The demand for language instruction increased in English-speaking countries at the same time that is why this corporation was growing every day.

During the 1950s, Berlitz opened his first Latin American language centre in Mexico, then in Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina, Colombia, and Chile. In Tokio

the language centre was opened later during the 1968. Nowadays there are about 50 Berlitz centers in Asia. Berlitz has a strong presence in Europe, with more than 126 Berlitz centres, and also in North America, with more than 70 centers in the US and Canada. The total number of Berlitz centres worldwide is more than 400, and this corporation continue growing every day.

(Berlitz M.D.1887)

The Berlitz' corporations have been growing all around the world; surely it is a useful method and has a lot of good results. The direct method is used in order to teach second languages, the use of it should be during class every day.

### **2.3 A Changing Student Body**

After the foundation of the company in 1878, Berlitz thought about the travellers' necessities and also about students that wanted to enrich their knowledge. Around the 1950s, it was a true challenge because Berlitz confronted with business people, professionals, and technicians that needed to handle the English language for their jobs, which is why the necessity of learning a new language was increasing every day, they needed to learn languages as quickly as possible.

In order to cover this necessity, Berlitz accelerated the change of conventional classes to private and small group instruction and created a new research program in order to develop new techniques of intensive

instruction. After some years of research and testing, Berlitz created a totally change in the way to teach a new language.

The new method that was discovered from Berlitz was the solution for students with an urgent need of the new language, such as moving to a foreign country. The program immerses the student in language instruction more than eight hours a day, for two to six weeks, with quick and successful results.

“The huge demand by the marketplace led Berlitz to develop home study materials to allow students to supplement their classroom lessons through vocabulary review and pronunciation. These were introduced in 1970, and today include books, cassettes, videos and CD-ROMs. Berlitz's curriculum and training department is constantly developing and updating materials to keep pace with changing technology and student needs.”

(BERLITZ Corporation, 2006 page 34)

Berlitz keeps on top of changing student needs with innovative program offerings that complement traditional language centre courses:

- Berlitz Study Abroad offers complete travel packages and the opportunity to study a new language in its country of origin.
- In 1988, Berlitz acquired the Language Institute for English (L.I.F.E.), now known as ELS Language Centers, which provides intensive

English instruction, recreational opportunities, and accommodations for foreign students on U.S. college campuses.

- Berlitz Jr. offers special foreign language programs for U.S. elementary, middle, and high school students both "on site" at schools or camps and at Berlitz language centers.
- Berlitz Cross-Cultural.- was established in 1994 to augment language learning with cultural expertise.
- In 1996 Berlitz launched a franchising program that strengthened the company presence and capabilities all over the world.
- Berlitz GlobalNet offers traditional document translation, and is a leader in software localization. It offers clients full production capabilities including foreign language word processing, desktop publishing and typesetting, graphics and layout, and a full range of audio-visual services. Berlitz also provides interpretation services in all languages virtually anywhere in the world.
- Berlitz books and audio products enable millions of people to study independently at home, and at their own pace. Berlitz-branded publishing products, such as travel guides, phrase books, dictionaries, and CDs, are recognized throughout the world for their quality, accuracy and ease-of-use.

(BERLITZ Corporation, 2006 page 35)

## 2.4 Corporate History

After Maximilian Berlitz died in 1921, his associated and son-in-law, Victor Harrison, assumed leadership of the organization. But later Harrison died in 1932 and control was to his son, Victor Harrison, Jr. Then he head the company with Jacques Strumpen-Darrie, a man who had built a succesful career with Berlitz in Europe and the United States for more than 30 years. Jacques' son Robert succeeded his father as president in 1953.

In 1966 Robert Strumpen-Darrie continued as president until his retirement in 1970, and Elio Boccitto led the company through most of the 1980s. (Berlitz, 1887. Method Berlitz. New York page 411)

Now it is known as the Benesse Corporation. Benesse, a leading Japanese publisher of correspondence courses and other educational materials. The Berlitz Corporation has had a lot of headed since its creation, but the most important is that it has increased and has reached a lot benefits for English students.

## **Chapter III**

### **3. Ideas on how to teach pronunciation through the Direct Method**

Now the Direct Method has been analyzed and its benefits have been studied, it is time to take a look at the ways it can be applied in the classroom so that students and teachers take advantage from it.

Pronunciation is not the easiest skill to master when someone is learning a foreign language, so the following activities are based on the direct method. The more learners are exposed to the target language, the better the results will be.

The success of these activities will be based on how well the lessons are planned, which is why this method must be applied in an organization activity.

#### **3.1 Grounds**

The direct method is applied for thousands of teachers around the world, because they think that to be in contact with the language is important in order to learn it that is why in the past the use of this method began.

"In the Direct Method, pronunciation is taught through intuition and imitation; students imitate a model – the teacher or a recording – and do their best to approximate the model through imitation and repetition. This instructional method was grounded on observations of children learning their first language and of children and adults learning foreign languages in non-instructional settings. Successors to this approach are the many so-called *naturalistic methods*, including comprehension methods that devote a period of learning solely to listening before any speaking is allowed. Examples include Asher's (1977) *Total Physical Response* and Krashen and Terrell's (1983) *Natural Approach*. Proponents maintain that the initial focus on listening without pressure to speak gives the learners the opportunity to internalise the target sound system. When learners do speak later on, their pronunciation is supposedly quite good despite their never having received explicit pronunciation instruction" (BROWN H.D. 2001. Teaching by principles page 256)

The principles that the Direct Method is based on derived into the following guidelines for teaching oral language, which are still followed in contemporary Berlitz schools:

- Never translate: demonstrate
- Never explain: act
- Never make a speech: ask questions
- Never imitate mistakes: correct
- Never speak with single words: use sentences

- Never speak too much: make students speak much
- Never use the book: use your lesson plan
- Never jump around: follow your plan
- Never go too fast: keep the pace of the student
- Never speak too slowly: speak normally
- Never speak too quickly: speak naturally
- Never speak too loudly: speak naturally
- Never be impatient: take it easy

(TITONE, 1968: 100-101)

The basic principles of the direct method is to use the language as much as possible in order to get familiar to the students vocabulary, that is why it has been an effective method during many years.

### **3.2 Using dictation to teach pronunciation**

Although the pronunciation teaching has not always been careless, it has been for a long time, and this situation does not appear to be changing despite the best efforts of some prominent FLT professionals.

According to Elliott and McGillick (1995), FL teachers tend to view pronunciation as the least useful of the basic language skills, partly because it seems to be so much more difficult to improve than other skills. In a 1998 TESOL Quarterly review of Celce-Murcia's 1996 book (Teaching

pronunciation: A reference for English Teachers to speakers of other languages), Salah Troudi wrote: "In spite of a general awareness of its role in ESL and EFL programs, pronunciation is still an almost neglected area in teacher education program... Nor does the teaching of pronunciation with all its related components play an obvious role in many EFL textbooks and syllaby". (TROUDI, Salah, 1996 page 109)

Dictation exercises are as old-fashioned as audio-lingual drills; and they, too, can periodically be employed in a novel way, not only to teach listening and writing, but also to bring instruction in pronunciation back into the classroom. Brown (2001) did not seem to have seen this when he wrote an article about "the interactive dictation". Pennington (1989) came closer when she suggested that the articulatory aspects of voice setting could be explored through "silent dictation". (BROWN, 2001 page 211)

It is really important the use of dictation in classes in order to teach pronunciation and spelling, the most difficult skill is listening, that is why dictation exercises are useful when teachers are teaching a Foreign Language.

### **3.2.1 How to use dictation**

#### **3.2.1.1 Before class**

- **Selecting the material.** Almost any 'text', thus most parts of any book, textbook, newspaper, magazine, broadcast, play, screenplay, poem,

speech or song can theoretically be dictated in a foreign language classroom. Having said that, the texts you select should be [1] in line with your students' average ability, [2] relevant to their needs and interests, [3] not too long (always less than a fully printed page) and [4] capable of being cut up into short, self-contained portions. For follow-up activities, videotaped dialogues are best. Texts that were used for different teaching purposes several weeks earlier can be re-used: dictations make for good 'reviews'.

(Krause C.A.1916, The Direct method in Modern Language page 412)

- **Preparing the material.** Type your chosen text, dividing it into six to twelve separate sections as you go along. Each section should not contain more than four separate utterances, nor should it usually exceed three lines in length. Double-spacing is a must. Number the sections, and leave some extra space between them. After typing/printing out your text, connect all the words that should be uttered in the same breath with a line. Then highlight the tonic units (the parts that are most stressed) in each breath group. Finally, make the same number of photocopies as the number of students in the largest of the groups you will later divide your class into.

(Krause C.A.1916, The Direct method in Modern Language page 413)

In order to use dictation in classes, teachers should prepare the selected material according to the student's level and try to make students understand

the sentences and the ideas, this technique is a good way to learn Foreign Languages.

### 3.2.1.2 In class

According to authors it is important to introduce a variety of activities in a class, starting for motivating students in order to catch students' attention. Here are some useful activities that should be in every day's class:

- **Warm-up.** Divide the class from six to twelve groups composed for two or five students. If your chosen text is one that is being re-used, your warm-up session can then be very short. If not, you must spend more time putting the learners in the picture, through an appropriate reading and/or speaking activity: they have to have some idea of what the text is all about before they begin working with it. Difficult words need not be explained at this stage, though.
- **Vocabulary work.** Ask each group to choose a delegate who will write problem words on the board. An appropriately chosen text should not contain more than 10-15 such lexical items, thus you should not accept more than a couple of words from any group. When these few lexical items are written on the board, help the learners guess their meaning, if possible, rather than giving straightforward definitions.

- **Coaching.** Sit down with a group and ask the students to read aloud their partial text in unison for you. Then read it aloud yourself, and have them repeat it together after you. Tell them that they will soon be dictating this portion of text to the rest of the class, so their pronunciation must be very, very good. Finally, ask them to keep reading their lines aloud until they have memorized everything: explain to them that they will not be able to use their paper strip(s) or any notes when they dictate. Move on to the next group and repeat the process. Go around all the groups at least once more and, this time, make the students listen for, and reproduce, breath groups and tonic units as units. Draw their attention to other supra-segmental features such as rhythm and stress, vowel reduction in unstressed syllables, morphological features at word boundaries, and intonation in general. Correct their most audible errors. If necessary, show them, with a drawing or even your own mouth, where the points of articulation of some sounds are. The learners can now ask you to repeat anything they want as often as they want.
- **Dictation.** When all the students are ready, tell the group that has the first portion of text what they will do next: they will stand together in front of the class, then one person will say the lines, not forgetting to speak up and also to use body language, and after a four-second pause somebody else will speak, and so on, until everybody has had a turn, and then they will all say the lines in unison one last time. Send these students to the front of the class and stand behind them. Ask the other

learners to write down what will be said. Let the first person speak. If you hear (a) noticeable error(s), say the lines yourself in a low voice before the second person speaks. Keep doing this after the second person speaks – only when necessary, but always whisper the lines yourself before the choral repetition at the end. Such multiple repetitions normally give note-takers enough time to write down what they hear. However, if there are just two speakers in front, they should both say their lines individually twice before speaking together. (FREEMAN, Larsen 1986 page 120)

The direct method includes the pronunciation practice, one of the most useful activities are the dictations activities that are planned in sequence.

### **3.2.1.3 Follow-up activities**

Follow-up activities are organized to a large degree by the nature of the texts initially selected. For instance, videotaped dialogues open more possibilities than re-corded monologues – but this should not rule out the use of printed-only material. Anyhow, here are a few of the things you can do after a dictation. (Richards, Jack 2002 page 14)

- **Partial in-class correction of writing errors through listening.** If a CD/DVD/audio/ video/tape-script were used for the dictation, play the tape, CD or DVD once or twice. If not, read the text aloud yourself. The learners

will see some of their mistakes when they hear/watch the whole, uninterrupted conversation or talk.

- **Discussion (speaking).** Short newspaper/magazine articles often introduce topics that can be discussed in small groups after a dictation. Each group can express an opinion and different opinions can then be compared. This kind of follow-up allows you to go beyond pronunciation/spelling and to emphasize content and meaning in a communicative context.
- **(Creative) Writing.** The learners could obviously write down the results of a discussion of the type suggested above. Such writing would be a small group effort, both structured and creative, and suitable for high intermediate and lower advanced levels. If you used a taped dialogue instead of an article, you have a framework that can be re-used: just change some of the original parameters (time and location, for example) and ask the learners to come up with a similar conversation. In this case, writing would be less creative, but lower-level learners could more easily do the work.

It is important for teachers to plan a lot of follow-up activities after the dictation exercises in order to complete the learning process according to the student's level.

### **3.3 Using songs to teach pronunciation**

The use of songs in classes in order to teach pronunciation has been considered a good tool, it is necessary to choose songs specifically to work on pronunciation. Songs provide examples of authentic, memorable and rhythmic language. They can be motivating for students keen to repeatedly listen to and imitate their musical heroes.

#### **3.3.1 Using songs to focus on sounds**

Sounds are the smallest units from which words are formed and can be categorised as vowels and consonants and the use of songs helps to improve the sounds and pronunciation.

The use of different activities in classes are important in order to teach a new language, some listening activities are essential for improving pronunciation and sounds. The use of songs in classes are useful because students are motivated for singing and they focus on the pronunciation.

#### **Model Activity 1**

Replace some of the rhymes in the song, with a gap. Students listen and fill the gaps, using the song to guide them. More analytically minded students can then categorise the words according to sounds. (From '*An Englishman in New York*,' by Sting)

ɔ:	eɪ	ʌ
Talk	day	one
New York	say	sun
walk		run

Alternatively, differences between sounds can be highlighted, using the lyrics to show how changing one sound can alter meaning (minimal pairs).

### Model Activity 2

Choose six words from a song from which minimal pairs can be created

- heaven – even
- hunger - anger
- man – mad

(From '*Imagine*' by John Lennon)

Write the pairs separately on cards and give out one set per group of four or five students. The students then match the pairs. They then listen to the song and 'grab' the correct one. Choices are then checked against the lyrics.

The use of these activities is really useful in order to teach students pronunciation and practice the listening skill.

### **Model Activity 3**

Give out the lyrics, with certain words for students to guess the number of syllables, leaving a space by each word to write the number in. Students then listen, checking their predictions. At higher levels, repeat the activity, with students underlining the stressed syllable whilst listening. We then drill these words and sing or chant the whole song through.

### **Using songs to focus on connected speech**

Connected speech is the natural way we speak, linking together and emphasising certain words, rather than each word standing alone. Contractions (two words forming one) are an extreme example of the way we connect speech, to the extent that the written form too is affected.

- Students normally learn words individually and, especially at lower levels, tend to pronounce each word separately.
- Students frequently misconceive contractions as being 'incorrect', only used in 'slang'.
- Not all words within a phrase carry the same weight.

Songs, and especially the chorus, provide real and 'catchy' examples of how whole phrases are pronounced often to the extent that students find it difficult

to pick out individual words. The music further emphasises the 'flow' of the words.

Songs, like other spoken texts, are full of contractions.

Students can be keen to reproduce this, in order to sing the song as they hear it.

Use songs that have numerous contracted words to convince learners that contractions are natural in English.

#### **Model Activity 4**

Rewrite the lyrics with the contractions in full form

- 'I am wondering why'
- 'I cannot see'

Students listen, identifying the contracted words. On a second listening, they rewrite the words with the contractions

- 'I'm wondering why'
- 'I can't see'

This works even with the lowest level classes.

To help learners hear how words flow in phrases, choose catchy tunes for learners to fit words to.

### **Model Activity 5**

Play each line of the chorus, for learners to hum back until they get the rhythm.

- In groups, students then order the lines of the song on strips of paper by remembering the tune.
- Other activities can focus on highlighting the strong words in phrases, and singing only these, replacing the rest with 'mmm'. Finally, students can practise and present their singing, for example for a 'song contest'.
- Alternatively, more creative groups could write their own words to fit the tune.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

English is an important language and a lot of people around the world are learning this language, but the study of English is a little bit difficult for some people. It is necessary for teachers to apply techniques and methods in order to make the learning process easy and it is essential to active the students minds using the language directly.

It is important for teachers and students understand that learning a new language is not an easy process so learners must practice at every moment and everywhere.

The use of the direct method has reached a lot of important goals in recent years; also the use of it is increasing around the educative field because of the good results and the benefits that students show.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

We have a huge responsibility as teachers because we have to look for the best way to help students to communicate using the foreign language they are learning. Nowadays there is a variety of new methods and techniques that make the learning process easier than in the past.

It is necessary for all teachers to search the most effective method to teach the new language. Students need to understand and interchange information in different fields, because a lot of information is made in English. It is also important to keep up dating every day especially on the internet where we can find new and useful information that could be interesting in classes.

Students learn more when they have contact with the language in a direct way, one way is the use of dictation or a role play that shows the real stories and impacts students.

The recommendation for all teachers is to apply the direct method in each level because this method offers the opportunity to improve understanding and pronunciation in students.

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